United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea CLCS/60

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission

1. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its twenty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 11 August to 12 September 2008, pursuant to the decision taken at its twentieth session (see CLCS/56, para. 60) and to paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 62/215. The plenary part of the session was held from 18 to 29 August. The periods from 11 to 15 August and from 2 to 12 September were used for the technical examination of submissions at the Geographic Information System (GIS) laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs.

2. The following 20 members of the Commission attended the session: Alexandre Tagore Medeiros de Albuquerque, Osvaldo Pedro Astiz, Lawrence Folajimi Awosika, Harald Brekke, Galo Carrera Hurtado, Francis L. Charles, Peter F. Croker, Mihai Silviu German, Abu Bakar Jaafar, George Jaoshvili, Emmanuel Kalngui, Yuri Borisovitch Kazmin, Wenzheng Lu, Isaac Owusu Oduro, Yong-ahn Park, Fernando Manuel Maia Pimentel, Sivaramakrishnan Rajan, Michael Anselme Marc Rosette, Philip Alexander Symonds and Kensaku Tamaki. Indurlall Fagoonee informed the Chairman that he was not in a position to attend the session.

3. The Commission had before it the following documents and communications:

(a) Provisional agenda (CLCS/L.25);

(b) Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission (CLCS/58);

(c) Issues related to the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf — tentative dates of submissions: note by the Secretariat (SPLOS/INF/20, SPLOS/INF/20/Add.1, SPLOS/INF/20/Add.2);

(d) Submission of New Zealand dated 19 April 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

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(e) Joint submission of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland dated 19 May 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(f) Submission of Norway dated 27 November 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(g) Submission of France dated 22 May 2007 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(h) Submission of Mexico dated 13 December 2007 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(i) Submission of Barbados dated 8 May 2008 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(j) Submission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relating to the continental shelf of Ascension Island dated 9 May 2008 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(k) Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by New Zealand on 19 April 2006, including a summary thereof;

(l) Summary of the recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by Australia on 15 November 2004;

(m) Summary of the recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by Ireland on 25 May 2005;

(n) Decision on the vacancy in the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (SPLOS/181); decision regarding the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the ability of States, particularly developing States, to fulfil the requirements of article 4 of annex II to the Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the decision contained in SPLOS/72, paragraph (a) (SPLOS/183); and the report of the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (SPLOS/184);

(o) Communications from States: note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Suriname to the United Nations dated 7 August 2008 addressed to the Secretary-General; note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations dated 11 August 2008 addressed to the Secretary-General; note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations dated 24 July 2008 addressed to the Division; and letter from the head of the delegation of New Zealand dated 4 August 2008 addressed to the Chairman of the Commission.

Item 1
Opening of the twenty-second session by the Chairman of the Commission

4. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Albuquerque.

5. The Director of the Division, Václav Mikulka, made a statement in which he referred to the receipt of three new submissions that confirmed the increasing workload of the Commission. He provided the Commission with an update on the information concerning the tentative dates of future submissions to it (see SPLOS/INF/20, SPLOS/INF/20/Add.1 and SPLOS/INF/20/Add.2), adding that, at the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, Bangladesh stated its intention to make a submission in mid-2011; Mauritius indicated that it would make a submission by May 2009; South Africa stated that even though its Government had originally indicated that it would make two partial submissions, it would make one complete submission; Uruguay mentioned that it intended to make a submission by the end of August 2008; and Oman stated the intention of making a submission. The Director also recalled the decisions taken by the Meeting (see SPLOS/181 and SPLOS/183). In addition, he informed the Commission about further upgrades in the facilities of the Division made before the twenty-second session to ensure enhanced support for and assistance to the Commission and its subcommissions. In this connection, he referred to the acquisition of licences for additional software packages required by the Commission to analyse the submissions it receives.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda

6. The Chairman proposed the provisional agenda for consideration by the Commission. The provisional agenda was adopted without amendment (CLCS/59).

Item 3
Organization of work

7. The Chairman outlined the programme of work and the schedule for the Commission's deliberations on the various items on the agenda. Following a discussion, the Commission agreed on the programme of work.

Item 4
Consideration of the submission made by New Zealand to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Consideration of recommendations

8. At its twenty-first session, the Commission decided to defer consideration of the recommendations to the twenty-second session, pursuant to rule 53 of the rules of procedure (CLCS/40/Rev.1).

9. At the twenty-second session, the members of the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by New Zealand delivered a series of presentations focusing on the four geographical regions covered in the submission made by New Zealand, as well as on certain aspects or areas that required more detailed analysis.

10. The Commission then carried out a thorough examination of the recommendations prepared by the Subcommission, which are contained in "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by New Zealand on 19 April 2006". Certain amendments were proposed, and the Commission decided to incorporate some of them into the text of the recommendations.

11. In its examination of the recommendations, the Commission proceeded on a region-by-region basis and, in instances where all efforts to achieve consensus had been exhausted, resorted to decision-making by way of a vote. On 22 August 2008, the Commission adopted the "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by New Zealand on 19 April 2006" by 13 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions. Pursuant to article 6, paragraph 3, of annex II to the Convention, the recommendations, including a summary thereof, were submitted in writing to the coastal State and to the Secretary-General.

Item 5
Consideration of the joint submission made by France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the twenty-second session

12. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Jaafar, informed the Commission that the Subcommission met during the twenty-second session, from 11 to 15 August 2008, on 28 August 2008, and from 2 to 3 September 2008. During the session, the Subcommission continued its examination of the joint submission, in particular that of the revised outer limits submitted by the four coastal States on 17 June 2008. The Subcommission met with the four delegations on 2 and 3 September 2008, and received a presentation by the Focal Point for the four delegations on 2 September 2008.

13. The Subcommission, having fully considered all the available data and information submitted to date, presented to the four delegations its views and general conclusions, particularly on the revised outer limits, on 3 September 2008. The Subcommission also informed the four delegations of the plans for its future work.

14. The Subcommission agreed that, during the twenty-third session, its meetings would be held from 16 to 20 March 2009.

Item 6
Consideration of the submission made by Norway to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the twenty-second session

15. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Symonds, informed the Commission that, in July 2008, the delegation of Norway provided a detailed response to the presentation that the Subcommission had made to the delegation during the twenty-first session on its preliminary views with regard to certain areas of the submission of Norway.

16. During the twenty-second session, the Subcommission met from 4 to 12 September, and continued its analysis of the data and other materials contained in the submission of Norway, in particular in the response received from Norway in July 2008.

17. During the last week of the twenty-second session, from 9 to 12 September, the Subcommission held three meetings with the delegation of Norway. The delegation made several presentations to the Subcommission on certain aspects of the submission of Norway, and the Subcommission informed the delegation about its preliminary views on certain areas of the submission.

18. The Subcommission also notified the delegation about its future programme of work and its planned meetings at the resumed twenty-second session from 1 to 12 December 2008, and prior to the plenary part of the twenty-third session from 2 to 13 March 2009.

Item 7
Consideration of the submission made by France to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work during the twenty-second session

19. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Carrera, informed the Commission that the Subcommission had met from 11 to 15 August 2008 to continue its analysis of the data and other materials contained in the submission made by France. The Subcommission met with the delegation of France three times from 13 to 15 August. Mr. Carrera informed the Commission that the Subcommission would continue its consideration of the submission during the intersessional period and that it would meet from 16 to 20 March 2009, at which time it intends to provide to the delegation a comprehensive presentation of its views and general conclusions arising from the examination of the submission. Subsequently, the Subcommission would prepare its recommendations to be submitted to the Commission at the plenary of the twenty-third session.

Item 8
Consideration of the submission made by Mexico to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work during the twenty-second session

20. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Tamaki, informed the Commission that the Subcommission met during the twenty-second session from 4 to 5 September 2008, commencing its consideration of the partial submission made by Mexico. The Subcommission verified the format and completeness of the submission and then proceeded to undertake a preliminary analysis of the submission. It was then agreed to form three working groups within the Subcommission, on hydrography, geology and geophysics, with a view to proceeding with more detailed consideration of the submission. The Subcommission then transmitted a number of questions to the delegation of Mexico.

21. The Subcommission decided that its members would continue to work individually on the submission during the intersessional period and that it would meet during the twenty-third session from 16 to 20 March 2009 and from 6 to 9 April 2009. The Subcommission has offered to meet at that time with the delegation of Mexico, if the delegation so requests.

Item 9
Consideration of the submission made by Barbados to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

22. On 8 May 2008, Barbados submitted to the Commission, in accordance with article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, information on the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Pursuant to rule 51, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedure, the consideration of the submission was included in the agenda of the twenty-second session of the Commission.

23. The presentation to the Commission on the submission of Barbados was made by Leonard Nurse, Barbados' Special Envoy for the Environment, Leader of Barbados' Continental Shelf Project Management Team and head of the delegation, and Mervyn Gordon, Senior Manager, Barbados National Oil Company Limited, on 26 August 2008. The delegation of Barbados also included Christopher Hackett, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations, and a number of scientific, legal and technical advisers.

24. In his statement, Mr. Nurse indicated that no member of the Commission had assisted Barbados by providing scientific and technical advice with respect to the submission.

25. In respect of disputes related to the submission, Mr. Nurse noted that the Government of Barbados had held consultations with the Governments of France, Suriname and Guyana. He informed the Commission that all States involved in the

consultations had agreed that they would not object to the consideration by the Commission of their respective submissions, on the understanding that the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf is without prejudice to its delimitation. That understanding was also confirmed in the note verbale dated 7 August 2008 from Suriname addressed to the Secretary-General. With respect to the note verbale dated 11 August 2008 from Trinidad and Tobago addressed to the Secretary-General, Mr. Nurse stated that the note contained no objection from that State to the consideration by the Commission of the submission of Barbados.

26. Mr. Gordon then elaborated on the scientific and technical aspects of the submission. Following the presentation, members of the delegation of Barbados responded to questions posed by the members of the Commission. In response to a question regarding confidentiality of the information submitted, Mr. Nurse stated that the delegation would communicate on that matter later, through the Division.

27. The Commission then continued its meeting in private. Addressing the modalities for the consideration of the submission, the Commission decided that, as provided for in article 5 of annex II to the Convention and in rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure, the submission of Barbados would be addressed through the establishment of a subcommission. The Commission, however, decided not to establish the Subcommission at the present session, by 11 votes to 5, with 2 abstentions.

Item 10
Consideration of the submission made by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

28. On 9 May 2008, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted to the Commission, in accordance with article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, information on the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured relating to the continental shelf of Ascension Island. Pursuant to rule 51, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure, the consideration of the submission was included in the agenda of the twenty-second session of the Commission.

29. The presentation on the submission of the United Kingdom was made on 27 August 2008 by Douglas Wilson, Assistant Legal Adviser of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and head of the delegation, and Lindsay Parson, head of the Law of the Sea Group at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, United Kingdom. The delegation of the United Kingdom also included several scientific, legal and technical advisers.

30. In his presentation, Mr. Wilson stated that, in view of its long and continuous history of individuals working and living on the island carrying out economic activity, Ascension Island qualifies under article 121 of the Convention for both an exclusive economic zone and a continental shelf.

31. Mr. Wilson indicated that the submission made by the United Kingdom was a partial one and that, in addition to the submission made jointly with France, Ireland

and Spain on 19 May 2006, the United Kingdom intended to make further partial submissions in due course.

32. In respect of disputes related to the submission, Mr. Wilson indicated that the area of continental shelf covered by the partial submission was not the subject of any dispute between it and other States. In this connection, he recalled that no notes verbales concerning the partial submission had been addressed to the Secretary-General, or otherwise made by other States.

33. He stated that the United Kingdom had not received scientific and technical advice with respect to the delineation from any member of the Commission. Mr. Wilson specified that the submission had been jointly prepared by the National Oceanography Centre, at Southampton; the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, and the Law of the Sea Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, noting that certain data used in the submission should to be treated as confidential under the terms of annex II of the Rules of Procedure. Following the presentation, members of the delegation of the United Kingdom responded to questions posed by the members of the Commission.

34. The Commission then continued its meeting in private. Addressing the modalities for the consideration of the submission, the Commission decided that, as provided for in article 5 of annex II to the Convention on the Law of the Sea and in rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the submission of the United Kingdom would be addressed through the establishment of a subcommission. Similar to its decision in respect to the submission by Barbados, the Commission did not establish the Subcommission for the consideration of the submission by the United Kingdom at the present session.

Item 11
Report of the Chairman of the Commission on the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

35. The Chairman of the Commission informed the members of the Commission of the outcome of the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, in particular the decisions contained in documents SPLOS/181 and SPLOS/183, noting that, overall, States Parties represented at the Meeting had commended the Commission for its work. The Commission took note of the decisions of the Meeting and decided to refer the request contained in paragraph 3 of document SPLOS/183 to its Training Committee, which was requested to prepare a list of sources of publicly available scientific and technical data relevant to the preparation of submissions to the Commission for consideration by the Commission at its next session. The members of Scientific and Technical Advice Committee were invited to participate in that endeavour.

Item 12
Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Confidentiality

36. The Chairman of the Committee on Confidentiality, Mr. Croker, reported that the Committee had held one meeting during the twenty-second session. He stated

that even though no circumstances had arisen since the last session requiring such a meeting, he considered it useful to convene the Committee in order to discuss a proposal relating to the establishment of a register of members providing scientific and technical advice to coastal States in their personal capacity. The Committee concluded unanimously that such a proposal required further consideration by the Commission. However, the Committee was also of the view that the matter was outside its purview and that it should be referred instead to the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee. The Commission took note of the report of the Chairman of the Committee on Confidentiality and decided that the above-mentioned proposal should be taken up by the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee during the twenty-third session of the Commission.

Item 13
Report of the Chairman of the Editorial Committee

37. The Chairman of the Editorial Committee, Mr. Jaafar, reported that no meetings of the Committee had been held during the twenty-second session. He recalled that the result of the work of the Committee at previous sessions on the rules of procedure was contained in document CLCS/40/Rev.1.

Item 14
Report of the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee

38. The Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee, Mr. Symonds, stated that the Committee had not received any formal requests for scientific and technical advice since the twenty-first session. However, the Division had received a diplomatic note from a coastal State party addressed to the Secretary of the Commission on 11 July 2008, which contained a request for scientific and technical advice during the preparation of the data and other materials on the outer limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from a specific member of the Commission.

39. The Division responded to that note on 17 July 2008 and requested further clarifications from the State concerned on the technical and scientific details of the assistance needed. The Division also provided general information on the manner in which the Commission would deal with such requests from coastal States.

40. The Committee requested that it be kept informed on the nature of requests for assistance from coastal States. The Chairman of the Committee requested the Secretariat to forward to the Committee any reply to the response from the Division, and any future requests for assistance from coastal States.

41. The Chairman of the Committee indicated that it would be helpful to the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee in fulfilling its functions if States could specify details of the nature of the assistance required to enable the Committee to prepare a list of the "proposed members who may provide advice taking into consideration the technical and scientific nature of each request". States considering making such requests can find further information on the website of the Commission.

42. The Chairman of the Committee requested the members who were elected to the Commission for the first time at the twentieth Meeting of States Parties held in 2007 to submit short biographic notes, including a brief statement of expertise, for posting on website of the Commission. The Chairman also requested the re-elected members to update their biographic notes as necessary. All members were asked to send the information to the Secretariat according to a template that would be made available to the members through established means of communication as soon as possible after the twenty-second session.

43. The Chairman confirmed the availability of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee to work with the Training Committee to fulfil the request contained in paragraph 3 of the decision of the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (see SPLOS/183 and para. 35 above).

Item 15
Report of the Chairman of the Training Committee and other training issues

44. The Chairman of the Training Committee, Mr. Carrera, reported that, in the absence of any training issues, the Committee had not held any meetings. Regarding future work, he noted that the Committee had been requested to prepare a draft for consideration by the Commission in relation to the request contained in paragraph 3 of the decision of the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (see SPLOS/183 and para. 35 above).

45. Under agenda item 15, the Secretary of the Commission provided an overview of the Division's capacity-building activities on the preparation of a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf regarding the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. The Secretary reported that since the last session of the Commission, the Division had been planning further training activities in the West African region. In particular, the Division had been preparing an advanced training course in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme Shelf Programme and the Global Research Information Database in Arendal, Norway (Grid-Arendal), to be held in Windhoek in September 2008.

46. The Commission took note of the excellent series of regional and subregional training courses on delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles and for preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf organized by the Division since 2005, which had benefited to date 54 States and 253 participants.

47. One member proposed that, in view of the long inactivity of the Training Committee, the Commission should discontinue it. The proposal was rejected by 11 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions.

Item 16
Other matters

Solemn declaration

48. Pursuant to rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, Mr. Jaoshvili made the solemn declaration in connection with the assumption of his duties. The solemn declaration was done in writing and was transmitted to the Director of the Division.

Brazil request for clarifications from the Commission

49. The Chairman requested the Vice-Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Kazmin, to chair the Commission during the consideration of a request contained in a note verbale dated 24 July 2008 from the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Commission.

50. The Government of Brazil requested clarifications from the Commission in relation to the "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by Brazil on 17 May 2004".

51. In the light of the nature of the questions raised by Brazil, and on the basis of past practice, the Commission decided to transmit the request to the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Brazil.

52. The Subcommission will prepare a draft reply to be submitted to the Commission at its next session. It was also decided that any specific issues to be addressed directly by the Commission would be considered at that time.

53. The Commission decided to include the item in the agenda for its twenty-third session.

Expenses of the members of the Commission

54. In view of the increasing workload of the Commission and the number of weeks that the members are required to spend in New York, the Commission reopened the discussion of coverage of expenses incurred by its members, including those relating to medical assistance and insurance coverage, as well as loss of income.

55. The Commission requested the Secretariat to remind States that had nominated members of their obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including coverage of medical expenses where necessary, and decided to establish an intersessional working group, to be composed of Messrs. Carrera, Charles, Croker, Jaafar, Kazmin, Oduro and Park, to prepare a draft proposal for consideration by the Commission at its next session. The objective of that proposal would be a request to the Meeting of States Parties to advise as to the nature and extent of "expenses" to be covered by the nominating State pursuant to article 2, paragraph 5, of annex II to the Convention, in view of practical difficulties that the members of the Commission may incur during the discharge of their functions in New York.

Format of recommendations and the summaries thereof

56. The Commission discussed the modalities of implementation of paragraph 3 of annex III of the Rules of Procedure, relating to the summaries of recommendations.

57. By 18 votes to 1, with no abstentions, the Commission adopted the "Summary containing excerpts of the recommendations of the Commission in relation to the submission made by Australia on 15 November 2004". It also adopted by consensus the "Summary containing excerpts of the recommendations of the Commission in relation to the submission made by Ireland on 25 May 2005".

58. One member proposed to amend the Rules of Procedure with a view to removing the reference to summaries. The proposal was twofold and included an amendment to rule 53, paragraph 3, and the deletion of paragraph 3 of section 11, chapter V of annex III to the Rules of Procedure. The proposal did not receive the support of the majority of members and was withdrawn.

59. The Commission decided not to prepare a new summary of the recommendations of the Commission in relation to the submissions made by the Russian Federation[1] and a summary of the recommendations of the Commission in relation to the submissions made by Brazil.

60. The Commission then decided to establish a working group composed of Messrs. Brekke, Carrera, Jaafar, Symonds and Tamaki, Chairmen of past and present subcommissions, to prepare a draft proposal on a unified format for the recommendations to be considered at the twenty-third session of the Commission.

Access to the submissions

61. Notwithstanding its decision not to establish new subcommissions at the present session (see paras. 27 and 34 above), the Commission decided by consensus that members of the Commission should have access to all submissions at all times, taking into consideration the practical implications and the costs for the Secretariat, so that they could familiarize themselves with the content of submissions, should they wish to do so.

Future sessions of the Commission

62. The Commission decided that it would resume its twenty-second session from 1 to 12 December 2008, during which the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Norway would meet. The Commission also decided that its twenty-third session would be held from 2 March to 9 April 2009 and the twenty-fourth session would be held from 10 August to 11 September 2009, on the understanding that the periods from 23 March to 3 April and from 24 August to 4 September would be for plenary meetings and that the periods from 2 to 20 March, from 6 to 9 April, from 10 to 21 August and from 8 to 11 September 2009 would be used for the technical examination of submissions at the GIS laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division.

63. It was also decided that, in addition to its meeting in December 2008, the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Norway would meet from 2 to 13 March 2009; the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom would meet from 16 to 20 March 2009; the Subcommission established to examine the submission made by France would meet from 16 to 20 March 2009; and that the

[1] See A/57/57/Add.1, paras. 38-41, for a short summary of the recommendations prepared by the Secretariat.

Subcommission established to examine the submission made by Mexico would meet from 16 to 20 March and from 6 to 9 April 2009.

Trust funds

64. The Secretary informed the Commission about the status of the trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of the participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission. According to the provisional statement of accounts, as at the end of July 2008, the balance of the trust fund was $596,627.

65. He also provided an overview of the status of the trust fund for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of submissions, indicating that its balance as at the end of July 2008 was $2,273,582.

Conclusion

66. The Commission noted with appreciation the high standard of Secretariat services rendered to it and the upgrade of the facilities of the Division, including the acquisition of additional software packages. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the staff of the Division and other members of the Secretariat for the assistance provided to the Commission during the twenty-second session.